

Camden
Near Port Royal
Caroline County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-184

HABS
VA
17 PORO.V,
2-

AC...M
FOLLOWS...

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Virginia

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Headquarters Office
for District of Virginia

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CAMDEN
Near Port Royal, Caroline County, Virginia

ADDENDUM
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Owner: Richard Pratt

Date of erection: 1857, on foundations of earlier building

Present condition: Good

Description:

Frame; two stories; hip roof with intersecting gables; front three bays, central projecting to form bays of former tower destroyed in Civil War. Windows throughout are mullioned in double and triple groups; flat, segmental, and round arched heads. Large porch with cut stone floor; conservatory to south; kitchen wing to north. Interior contains characteristic woodwork of the period. Some old doors and sash of earlier building remain in basement. *Foundations of older building also remain. It is possible present building is an alteration to an older one.*

Additional data:

Building was erected for Pratt family shortly before the Civil War by Starkweather, an architect of Washington and Baltimore. Most of the furnishings were run in through the blockade. Tower was destroyed by gunfire of Federal gunboats. The house is still occupied by the family of the builder, and most of the furnishings are original. The presentation drawings of the architect are still preserved in the house.

* "There is little known of Nathan G. Starkweather, other than that contained in the Treasurer's accounts of the First Presbyterian Church in this city. This church, a beautiful brown stone edifice with a magnificent tower, was built by Starkweather, and Lind worked with him as a draftsman. Lind's descendants claim that he was the architect, but this is not borne out by the records. So far as I have been able to learn Starkweather was always in financial difficulties, and the Treasurer of the church records that he had bailed him out of the debtors' prison and that he advanced endless sums for 'expenses'."

L. H. Dielman, Librarian
Peabody Institute, Baltimore

TW 11/1/40

Addendum to
Camden

HABS No. VA-184

S bank of Rappahannock River, .8 mi. N of N end
of State Rte. 686, .5 mi. N of intersection
of State Rte. 686 and U. S. Rte. 17
Port Royal Vicinity
Caroline County
Virginia

HABS,
VA,
17-PORO.V,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING RECORD
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

HABS

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Washington, D.C. 20243

STATE Virginia	COUNTY Caroline (17)	TOWN OR VICINITY Port Royal Vicinity
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Camden Place Pratt family documents		HABS NO. VA-184
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Camden		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) S bank of Rappahannock River, 0.8 mi. N of N end of State Rte. 686, 0.5 mi. N of intersection of State Rte. 686 & U.S. Rte. 17.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1856-59 Pratt family documents	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) N. G. Starkwether Architect's original drawings at Camden	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Camden is one of the most complete and best-preserved Italianate country houses in America. Except for the elaborate upper stage of the tower, which was removed after damage by military action in 1863, Camden appears substantially today as it does in architect Starkwether's drawings, preserved in the house. Much original furniture including parlor carpet and draperies remain <u>in situ</u> .		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Italianate villa		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Wooden frame with horizontal flush cypress siding originally painted & sanded to resemble masonry.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Central block approx. 54' x 54' including SE central pavilion, plus SW 20'-long conservatory NE 26'-long service wing, SE 12' x 45' porch, & NW 12' x 80' porch, making approx. 76' x 100' over all.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Cross-gable roof with widely overhanging eaves supported by elaborate paired brackets, extensive one-story roofed front & rear porches, semicircular-ended one-story conservatory wing, ornately trimmed triple & paired windows, flush siding, etched glass in entrance fanlights & sidelights.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Central hall 12' x 52' flanked by parlor 20' x 21' and library (with conservatory beyond) on SW and dining room and chamber (with service wing beyond) on NW. Main stairs in jog opposite closets at SE end of central hall. Second-floor plan similar. Original features include elaborate plaster marble mantels, some plumbing, gas chandeliers (electrified), furnace (unused), grained door and speaking tubes.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Upper stage of tower removed after war damage in 1863. Porch and conservatory balustrades removed at undetermined date. Conservatory floor, originally dirt, altered by inserting wooden floor at level of rest of first floor to convert room into living room circa 1960.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Condition excellent. Private residence.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE House was remarkably advanced for its date, having central heating (hot air), ducts for circulating cool air, private gas works (now gone), running water in all principal chambers and numerous closets and built-in cupboards. There was complete inside plumbing.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Pratt family documents. National Register of Historic Places listing. National Historic Landmark listing. Starkwether drawings (at Camden). William B. O'Neal, <u>Architectural Drawings in Virginia, 1819-1969</u> , n.p. [School of Architecture, University of Virginia, 1969].		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Denys Peter Myers, Architectural Historian, HABS		DATE 03/20/80